

MADRID, SPAIN

SPENCER HESSE

Program: WIP Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spring

Spencer's Major: Spanish Education

Academic Life: The Reunidas classes are designed for American study abroad students and are taught in a similar style to classes at UW-Madison. Complutense classes on the other hand are classes open to Spaniards as well as study abroad students from around the world. Both types of classes are taught by Spanish teachers and are heavily based on lecture and final exams. Generally the Complutense classes are slightly more challenging than the Reunidas classes. There is a wide range of types of classes available to take.

Advice for Someone Considering Madrid: Although the big city may seem intimidating at first, you quickly feel comfortable navigating the Metro and learn all of the best places in the city. In terms of location, you can't find anywhere better than Madrid. It is incredibly easy to get anywhere around Spain, or even Europe. Academically, the Complutense offers some of the best classes in all of Spain, and many are taught by professors who are the foremost experts on their respective subjects in the world.

Housing: In the spring program, all of the students had the opportunity to live with a "Señora" for the first month of their stay. After the first month, the housing is left open to you. You can choose to rent an apartment, or continue living with your host family. Although most people chose to move to apartments, I decided that I would rather stay with my host family for the semester. I think, for me, it was the perfect way to get to know the culture of Spain, as well as learn many of the opinions on current events that Spaniards hold.

First Impressions: The sheer size of Madrid was intimidating at first, but after a week or two of exploring the city, making new friends, and starting to understand the Spanish way of life, Madrid quickly became my new home. Looking back, what surprises me most was not the way that I managed to adjust to a new home and new culture, but rather how difficult it ended up being to leave at the end of my stay.



Spencer at the Palacio Cristal in Parque del Retiro.

“It is a unique program that truly challenges you to grow and change in the time you are there.”

